

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

12-6-2000

UM bureau uncovers new data about Montana micro-businesses

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "UM bureau uncovers new data about Montana micro-businesses" (2000). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 17001. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/17001>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



The University of
Montana

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS • MISSOULA, MT 59812 • 406-243-2522 • FAX: 406-243-4520

NEWS RELEASE

This release is available electronically on INN (News Net.)

Dec. 6, 2000

Contact: Shannon Jahrig, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, (406) 243-5113.

UM BUREAU UNCOVERS NEW DATA ABOUT MONTANA MICRO-BUSINESSES

MISSOULA —

Starting a small business may be one way to combat Montana's notoriously low wages and limited job opportunities, according to the latest issue of the Montana Business Quarterly.

"Small businesses have long been crucial in the economy, contributing new technologies, introducing new products, serving new markets and creating new jobs," states "Montana Micro-Businesses: New Data Uncovered," a Quarterly article written by Paul Polzin, John Baldrige, James Sylvester, Tara Crowley and Rebecca McGregor. "They may also serve the economy by functioning as a safety net for workers laid off by larger firms."

The Bureau of Business and Economic Research at The University of Montana recently surveyed 200 randomly selected low-income small-business owners in Montana, uncovering data on this often overlooked segment of the economy. According to the article, this information was previously unavailable because "small businesses by their very nature fall through the cracks of existing data and information systems. They may hire no workers, excluding them from employment and earning statistics collected by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry. They may operate out of the owner's home, so there are no storefronts or other forms of commercial identity."

Researchers surveyed a wide variety of businesses, ranging from cosmetic companies to

-more-

septic-tank installers to funeral parlors. The firms are categorized as micro-businesses because they meet the following criteria:

- They were started within the last three years.
- They had nine or fewer employees.
- Their 1999 total sales were less than \$500,000.
- The owner's household income was less than \$31,256 for a family with two adults and two children under age 18.

The survey found that micro-businesses represent a cross section of the economy and are not altogether different from larger businesses. In addition, micro-businesses are owned and operated almost equally by men and women, they are owner-operated and less than half have any employees.

Also, while only 35 percent of Montanans live west of the Continental Divide, 44 percent of micro-businesses are located there.

While running a small business is demanding, some benefits include staying home with children, more independence and extra income, the article says. For one woman, the advantages of owning her own business are "being able to decide what time I work and spending more time with my kids while I'm at home."

Other topics discussed in the article are start-up financing, business plans, business counseling, and use of computers and the Internet. The article also features profiles of two small Montana business owners, describing their motives for starting a new business, the challenges they have faced and the advice they have for others considering small business opportunities.

Other articles in the Autumn 2000 Montana Business Quarterly include "Summer Fires: Businesses Still Struggling to Recover," which discusses the economic impact local businesses experienced as a result of this year's devastating fire season; and "Montana Agriculture and the Global Economy," which examines policy concerns in the agricultural marketplace.

Also include in the latest Quarterly is a registration form for the 26th Annual Montana Economic Outlook Seminar series, which will take place in nine locations throughout Montana in early 2001. BBER researchers will discuss information technology trends and offer economic outlook forecasts for each seminar city.

For more information on the Montana Business Quarterly and the 26th Annual Montana Economic Outlook Seminar, contact The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Missoula, MT 59812 at (406) 243-5113 or visit the Web site at www.bber.umt.edu.

###

SJ/cbs
Local, state media
Microbiz.rl